



U.S. Department
Of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

Pre-Need Burial Planning

Pacific District
1301 Clay St, Suite 1230N
Oakland, CA 94612
510-637-6270
www.va.gov/burials-memorials

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Pre-Need Burial Eligibility Determination

Benefits of Getting a Pre-Need Determination

- Saves time and money. Talk to your family about your VA burial benefits and keep your determination letter with your important papers – it can help prevent your family spending money on funeral-related expenses that are covered by your VA burial benefits.
- You know what VA burial and memorial benefits you and your dependents are entitled to receive.
- Scheduling services is easier since you are already in the system.



The VA implemented the pre-need burial eligibility determination program to assist anyone who would like to know if they are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA is promoting pre-need eligibility determinations to encourage Veterans and their eligible family members to plan in advance to use VA burial benefits that Veterans have earned through their military service. Advanced planning for a Veteran's or loved-one's passing can eliminate unnecessary delays and reduce stress on a family at a difficult time.

VA Burial and Memorial Benefits

Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all members of the Armed Forces and Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements, as applicable, and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who die while on active duty or who die while on training duty, under certain circumstances, are also eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retired pay at the time of their death.

A Veteran's spouse, minor children, and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities (if diagnosed by age 21 or 23 if enrolled in college), may also be eligible for burial, even if they predecease the Veteran.

VA provides the gravesite, grave liner, opening and closing of the grave, government headstone or marker, U.S. burial flag, and perpetual care of the gravesite at no cost to the family.

How to Apply

Online (Preferred Option)

You can now apply online. Go to <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/> to complete the application process.

By Mail or Fax

You will need to print out the online application or VA Form 40-10007, *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery*. It is available online at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/>. You are required to submit separate forms for each person seeking a determination, along with supporting documentation of military service, such as a DD214.

By Mail:

National Cemetery Scheduling Office
P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151

By Fax:

1-855-840-8299 (Toll-Free)

What to Expect

The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration receives applications and makes pre-need burial eligibility determinations on a first in - first out basis. Please note that it is most critical that we provide eligibility and scheduling support to families with “Time of Need” requests for burial, meaning those circumstances where a death has occurred and families need to schedule a burial at a national cemetery. If that is your situation, you should contact your funeral service provider or the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

VA will review pre-need burial applications and provide written notice of a determination of eligibility. VA will store the pre-need application, supporting documentation, and the decision letter to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need.

We encourage families to keep the decision letter with supporting documentation with important papers in a safe place, and to discuss burial wishes and final arrangements with loved ones or other representatives. Submission of a pre-need burial eligibility application does not obligate the Veteran or family member to burial in a VA national cemetery.

Applicants may indicate a *preference* for a VA national cemetery on the application form, but a pre-need determination of eligibility does not guarantee burial in a specific VA national cemetery or a specific gravesite. VA assigns gravesites in cemeteries with available space once death has occurred, and the burial is scheduled.

At time of need, the next-of-kin, funeral home or other representative responsible for making final arrangements should contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 to request burial. VA will locate the pre-need decision letter and validate our determination. Because laws affecting VA burial eligibility and individual circumstances may change, upon receipt of a burial request, VA will verify pre-need decisions in accordance with the laws in effect at that time including bars to receipt of burial benefits.